

SCOTTSDALE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION REPORT



To: Transportation Commission
From: Ed Jones, Sr. Transportation Representative
Meeting Date: March 21, 2013
Subject: Wheels to Meals

ITEM IN BRIEF

Action: Discuss/Approve

As a cost savings measure, and in collaboration with Granite Reef Senior Center staff, Transit staff proposes the development and evaluation of a transportation program providing a free transportation alternative to East Valley Dial-a-Ride (EVDAR) for participants traveling to and from the Granite Reef Senior Center (GRSC) for a subsidized lunch program.

This program would be called "Wheels to Meals", utilizing existing Transit staff and program software to facilitate participant enrollment, program evaluation, and voucher production.

Background:

For several years, the GRSC has participated in a subsidized lunch program provided by the Tempe Community Action Agency's Senior Action Program (funded by the Area Agency on Aging Region One, the cities of Tempe and Scottsdale, the Valley of the Sun United Way, and other contributors).

In collaboration with GRSC staff, Transit staff identified ten (10) low income participants of this program who utilize EVDAR as their service of choice for transportation to and from the GRSC on a daily basis. The participant has a choice when booking EVDAR to take an ADA or a non-ADA trip. If the participant schedules the trip as non-ADA, he or she would be charged a fare of \$1.00 for each direction of travel. If the travel is scheduled as an ADA trip, the fare increases to \$4.00 for each direction of travel. While these fares appear minimal, in reality, the financial impact on these particular participants can create a barrier in accessing the Meals program and achieving appropriate nutrition.

During the first 10 months of FY12, these 10 participants took 1,438 trips at an average cost to the City of \$42.72 per trip, totaling \$61,431. Had these participants utilized EVDAR service five days a week for travel to this program, the City's cost would have been approximately \$213,600. This equates to \$21,360 per participant per year, with no way for the City to manage or restrict the number of participants utilizing EVDAR service for the meal program.

Proposal:

Initiate “Wheels to Meals” program for a 12-month pilot for 15 participants with a similar program structure as the existing dialysis program.

- Enrollment will be restricted to participants of the Granite Reef lunch program, and verified by Granite Reef Human Services staff.
- The application process will be consistent with Cab Connection procedures regarding age, disability and residency requirements, and all applicants will be required to attempt the ADA certification process.
- Once enrolled, participants will receive a quantity of vouchers equal to the number of weekdays in a given month to accommodate travel to and from their residence to the Granite Reef Senior Center for the purpose of participating in the lunch program. The voucher will pay 100% of the Cab Fare and a 15% gratuity (identical to the Dialysis Voucher program).

Cost Projections:

With an average cost of \$13.64 per trip per participant, a 12-month pilot program for 15 participants will have an estimated cost of \$117,675 including the 15% gratuity. The equivalent non-ADA level of service provided by EVDAR is an estimated \$214,650 if all trips are scheduled as non-ADA trips. Depending on trip mix and gratuity inclusion, the “Wheels to Meals” program represents a potential cost savings of 40%.

Conclusion:

As a continuation of the City’s efforts to decrease paratransit costs while meeting higher demand for service, it’s critical to identify how paratransit services are used in correlation with other services and programs offered in support of our senior and disabled citizens. With this program, we are afforded an opportunity to tailor lower cost transportation modes specific to citizen needs, while decreasing the demand and reliance on higher cost paratransit services.

Recommendation:

Approve implementation of a 12-month “Wheels to Meals” travel program. Transit staff, in collaboration with Senior Center staff, feel the “Wheels to Meals” program will provide efficient, cost effective transportation in support of the GRSC lunch program, and should be evaluated for a 12-month period to substantiate potential cost savings.

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Wheels to Meals Pilot Program Proposal

Scottsdale Transportation Commission
March 21, 2013

Background

- Granite Reef Senior Center (GRSC) hosts daily subsidized lunch program
- 10 low income residents rely on Dial-a-Ride (DAR) to participate in lunch program
 - Resident's share of DAR fare may restrict access, impacting appropriate nutrition
 - City's share of FY 12 DAR fare was \$47.72 per trip, or \$61,431 for 1,438 trips provided



Wheels to Meals Proposal

- 12 month pilot program utilizing existing Transit staff and software to facilitate program enrollment, evaluation and voucher production
 - Enrollment limited to 15 lunch program participants only, verified by GRSC Human Services staff
 - Cab Connection procedures apply for enrollment and administration
 - Participants receive a quantity of vouchers equal to number of weekdays in given month
 - Voucher pays 100% of cab fare and 15% gratuity (identical to Dialysis Voucher Program)



Wheels to Meals

12 Month Cost Projection/Comparison

Assumptions:

15 participants

250 program days annually

2 trips per participant each weekday

7,500 trips annually

| Trip Mode | City Cost | Resident Cost | Total Cost |
|--|-----------|---------------|------------|
| DAR ADA Trip | \$192,150 | \$30,000 | \$222,150 |
| DAR Non ADA Trip | \$214,650 | \$11,250 | \$225,900 |
| Wheels to Meals (includes 15% gratuity) | \$117,675 | \$0 | \$117,675 |



Discussion

- Identify cost savings opportunities within paratransit services
 - Continued collaboration with internal and external Human Services organizations
 - Focus on identifying how paratransit services are used in correlation with other services supporting senior and disabled residents
 - Tailor lower cost transportation modes specific to residents needs in order to decrease demand and reliance on higher cost paratransit services



Recommendation

Approve implementation of 12-month “Wheels to Meals” travel program. Transit staff, in collaboration with GRSC staff, feel this program will provide efficient, cost effective transportation in support of the GRSC lunch program, and should be evaluated for a 12-month period to substantiate potential cost savings.

